



# BULLETIN

## Summary of legislative bills

The Nebraska Legislature passed three bills during the last legislative session that amend the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act. The three bills are LB 13, LB 236, and LB 238. A summary of the new provisions is shown below. The full text of each bill is available on the Unicameral's Web site (<http://www.unicam.state.ne.us>).

### LB 13:

#### Enforcement; Role of Court Administrator; Miscellaneous

**Section 48-106** was amended to provide that the Workers' Compensation Act shall not apply to service performed by a person engaged in an agricultural operation, or performed by his or her related employees, when the service is occasional and performed for another person engaged in an agricultural operation who has provided or will provide reciprocal or similar service. In addition, subsection (7) of 48-106 was amended to clarify that an agricultural employer who elects not to provide workers' compensation insurance is required to provide written notice to *unrelated* employees informing them that the employer is not providing workers' compensation coverage.

**Section 48-118** was amended to make changes that were characterized by the introducer as purely technical revisions to make the statute more user-friendly. The new language is not intended to make any

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## Court staff honored at IAIABC convention

After a hectic week of committee meetings, seminars, and training sessions, three members of the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court received awards at a recent workers' compensation convention in Philadelphia, PA.

The 91st Annual Convention of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC) concluded with an Awards Banquet on Sept. 10 at the Philadelphia Park Hyatt. The following court staff were recognized for their contributions to the success of the IAIABC and the betterment of workers' compensation:

**Bruce Mayfield**, Lead Information Technology Applications Developer and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Project Manager, received the *Award for Continuing Contribution*. Mayfield was recognized for his invaluable technical expertise to many different IAIABC EDI committees. Mayfield is known for being a strong team player and continuously and willingly volunteering for new projects, including authoring articles for the *IAIABC Journal*.

**Su Perk Davis**, Public Information Manager and EDI Business Manager, received the *Outstanding Contribution by an Active Member Award*. At the 2000 IAIABC Annual Convention, Davis stepped forward as an architect and founding member of the Council of Committee Chairs. In that role she has helped to revitalize the IAIABC committees and for the past three years has served as Chair of the Council. Davis was recognized for stepping in to lead when the need was greatest and for her steady leadership over the years.

**Glenn Morton**, Administrator and 2004–2005 IAIABC President, received the *Past-President's Award* and was recognized for his patience and numerous contributions to the IAIABC. Years ago, Morton was part of the "rescue squad" that rallied to help restore the IAIABC committees and the EDI program that had fallen into disarray. He served well as a member of the Executive Committee, especially in guiding and motivating the committees. During his term as president, Morton served with careful attention to detail and complete integrity, and in doing so elevated the stature of the office and the association.

Founded in 1914, the IAIABC is a not-for-profit association representing most of the government agencies charged with the administration of workers' compensa-

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substantive changes to the manner in which the statute is to be implemented.

**Section 48-120.02** was amended to provide that a three-judge panel of the compensation court may revoke or suspend the certification of a managed care plan. The bill also provides that the Attorney General, when requested by the administrator of the compensation court, may file a motion for an order directing a managed care plan to appear before a three-judge panel and show cause as to why the panel should not revoke or suspend the certification of the plan. The presiding judge of the compensation court shall rule on such motion and, if applicable, appoint judges of the compensation court to serve on the panel. However, the presiding judge shall not serve on the panel. The Attorney General may appear before the panel and present evidence as provided in this section.

**Section 48-121.02** was amended to provide that the administrator of the compensation court shall determine the state average weekly wage for purposes of §48-121.01.

**Section 48-125** was amended to provide that any award or judgment against the State of Nebraska for a workers' compensation claim in excess of \$100,000 must be reviewed by the Legislature. Previously, legislative review was required for awards exceeding \$50,000. In addition, the bill clarifies that 30 days for purposes of a waiting-time penalty shall not run until 30 days after the effective date of the legislative bill appropriating the funds for payment of the award or judgment. This bill was introduced in response to *Soto v. State*, 269 Neb. 337, 693 N.W.2d 491 (2005).

**Section 48-144** was amended to provide that reports of accidents and settlements required by the compensation court shall be made in the form and manner prescribed by the administrator. The administrator shall also notify the superior consular officer of a foreign country when an injury results in

the death of an employee who is a citizen of that country.

**Section 48-144.03** was amended to provide that notices to the compensation court may be filed by electronic means if the administrator has approved such electronic means.

**Section 48-145** was amended to provide that approval of an employer to self insure its liability under the Workers' Compensation Act is valid for the period prescribed by the compensation court unless earlier revoked pursuant to this section. The Attorney General, when requested by the administrator of the compensation court, may file a motion for an order directing a self-insurer to appear before a three-judge panel of the compensation court and show cause as to why the panel should not revoke approval as a self-insurer. The presiding judge of the compensation court shall rule on such motion and, if applicable, appoint judges of the compensation court to serve on the panel. However, the presiding judge shall not serve on the panel. The Attorney General may appear before the panel and present evidence as provided in this section. The bill also provides that the compensation court or designee of the compensation court may audit the payroll of a self-insurer.

**Section 48-145.01** was amended to provide that a partner or employee of a limited liability partnership who had authority to secure the payment of compensation and failed to do so shall be individually guilty of a Class I misdemeanor and shall be personally liable jointly and severally with the employer for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act. An officer, member, manager, partner, or employee of a corporation, limited liability company, or limited liability partnership who had authority to secure the payment of compensation and willfully failed to do so may be held jointly and severally liable with the employer for a monetary penalty ordered pur-

suant to this section. The Attorney General may file a motion for an order directing an employer to appear before a judge of the compensation court and show cause as to why a monetary penalty should not be assessed pursuant to this section. The Attorney General may appear before the court and present evidence as provided in this section.

**Section 48-145.02** was amended to require that employers provide information at the request of the administrator regarding the employer's liability under the Act, including the employer's federal identification number.

**Section 48-145.04** was amended to provide that the administrator shall annually estimate the cost to the court of evaluating an application for self insurance and administering the self insurance program, and assess such costs against applicants for self insurance.

**Section 48-146.02** was amended to delete references to suspension of approval to self-insure. The bill also provides that the Attorney General, when requested by the administrator of the compensation court, may file a motion for an order directing a workers' compensation insurer, risk management pool, or self-insurer to appear before a three-judge panel of the compensation court and show cause as to why the panel should not take action pursuant to this section (e.g., for violation of claims handling standards). The presiding judge of the compensation court shall rule on such motion and, if applicable, appoint judges of the compensation court to serve on the panel. However, the presiding judge shall not serve on the panel. The Attorney General may appear before the panel and present evidence as provided in this section.

**Section 48-152** was amended to provide that the compensation court shall have authority to administer and enforce all provisions of the Nebraska Workers'

Compensation Act, except those provisions committed to the courts of appellate jurisdiction *or as otherwise provided by law*.

**Section 48-155** was amended to provide that selection of the presiding judge by the judges of the court shall be subject to approval of the Supreme Court. In addition, the bill provides that the presiding judge of the compensation court shall rule on all matters submitted to the compensation court except those arising in the course of original or review hearings *or as otherwise provided by law*. The presiding judge shall assign or direct the assignment of work to the judges, clerk, and employees who support the judicial proceedings of the court.

**Section 48-157** was amended to distinguish the role of the presiding judge and administrator in appointing and supervising the employees of the court. The presiding judge shall appoint the clerk of the court and the employees who support the judicial proceedings of the court, subject to approval of the compensation court as a whole. The duties for these employees will be prescribed by the compensation court as a whole, and such employees will serve at the pleasure of the compensation court as whole.

The bill also provides that the presiding judge shall, subject to the approval of the court as a whole, appoint the administrator who will serve as the chief administrative officer of the court. The administrator will perform duties prescribed by the presiding judge or as provided by law, but will serve at the pleasure of the compensation court as a whole. The administrator will appoint all employees of the court, other than the clerk and the employees who support the judicial proceedings of the court, subject to approval of the presiding judge. Employees appointed by the administrator will perform duties prescribed by the administrator and will serve at the pleasure of the administrator.

In addition, language was added to clarify that when a petition or motion is filed the clerk shall, on a rotating basis, assign one of the judges of the compensation court to hear the cause. Also, existing language allowing the court to charge a fee for the reproduction of documents was deleted from this section and transferred to §48-165 where the duty is assigned to the administrator.

**Section 48-158** was amended to provide that the administrator, in addition to the judges and the clerk of the compensation court, shall be bonded as required by §11-201 and shall take the statutory oath of office before entering upon their duties.

**Section 48-159** was amended to provide that the administrator, along with the clerk and all other employees of the court, shall receive such salary as determined by the compensation court as a whole. Salaries shall not exceed the amount appropriated by the Legislature.

**Section 48-162** was amended to transfer existing language regarding powers of the judges of the court (e.g., authority to require the production of books, documents, etc.) from §48-163 to this section for organizational purposes only. No substantive change is involved in the transfer. Existing language allowing the court to establish a schedule of fees for services and to maintain a toll-free information line is deleted from this section and transferred to §48-165, where those duties are assigned to the administrator.

**Section 48-162.01** was amended to delete references to court approval of physicians and physical rehabilitation facilities and providers. The bill also provides that a *vocational rehabilitation specialist* of the court shall select a vocational rehabilitation counselor if the parties cannot agree. Any change in the choice of a vocational rehabilitation counselor shall be approved by a *vocational rehabilitation specialist or judge*

*of the court*. Any vocational rehabilitation plan shall be evaluated by a vocational rehabilitation specialist of the court and approved by such specialist or a judge of the court prior to implementation. In evaluating a plan, the vocational rehabilitation specialist of the court shall make an independent determination as to whether the proposed plan is likely to result in suitable employment. The appropriate priority for a vocational rehabilitation plan shall be determined by a vocational rehabilitation specialist or judge of the compensation court as well as the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

The bill also provides that the Attorney General, when requested by the administrator of the compensation court, may file a motion with the compensation court regarding any issue related to vocational rehabilitation services or costs. The Attorney General may initiate an original action before the court, or may intervene in a pending action and become a party to the litigation. Any such motion shall be heard by a judge of the court other than the presiding judge. Finally, existing provisions have been rearranged within the section for organizational purposes only. No substantive change is involved in the rearrangement.

**Section 48-162.02** was amended to provide that the administrator of the compensation court shall administer the Workers' Compensation Trust Fund. The administrator shall be charged with conservation of the assets of the fund and may order payments from the fund in prescribed circumstances. In addition, the administrator may request the Attorney General to represent the fund in proceedings brought by or against the fund pursuant to §48-162.01. The administrator shall also determine when contributions to the fund are to resume and issue the required notices. The bill also clarifies the manner in which payments from the fund shall be made.

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**Section 48-163** was amended to delete redundant language regarding duties of the court. Language was added to provide that the administrator will maintain a list of subscribers who want to be notified of the court's public hearings to consider rule changes, and will distribute copies of the court's rules and regulations. All rules and regulations will continue to be established by the court as a whole. However, rules and regulations relating to the court's adjudicatory function shall become effective only upon approval of the Supreme Court.

**Section 48-165** was amended to establish duties for the administrator relating to blank forms, to delete obsolete and redundant language relating to such forms, and to allow the administrator to establish a schedule of fees for services and maintain a toll-free information line.

**Section 48-177** was amended to provide that an action may be dismissed by the plaintiff, if represented by counsel, without prejudice to a future action, before the final submission of the case to the compensation court.

**Section 48-188** was amended to eliminate a restriction on the orders, awards, or judgments that may be filed with the district court for purposes of this section. Current law allows such filings for orders relating to compensation owed under the Act, but this change would allow other orders, including monetary penalties for failure to obtain workers' compensation coverage, to be enforced through the district court as well.

**Section 48-1,102** was amended in connection with changes to §48-125 to provide that notice of any portion of an award in excess of \$100,000 shall be delivered by the State Risk Manager to the chairperson of the Business and Labor Committee at the next regular session of the Legislature convening after the date of the award becomes final and nonappealable.

**Section 48-1,110** was amended to delete obsolete language.

**Section 48-1,116** was amended to delete obsolete language, or inapplicable references resulting from the transfer of provisions pursuant to this bill.

LB 13 also adds a new provision to the Workers' Compensation Act to require that any person or entity who dispenses medicines and medical supplies pursuant to §48-120 shall dispense the generic drug equivalent unless a generic drug equivalent is unavailable, or the prescribing physician specifically provides in writing that a nongeneric drug must be dispensed.

*Effective date of §§48-125 and 48-1,102 June 3, 2005.*

*Operative date of all remaining provisions September 4, 2005.*

## LB 236:

### Cross Appeals; Plain Error

**Section 48-179** was amended to provide that the filing of an application for review shall vest in an appellee the right to cross appeal against any other party to the appeal. If appellee files a brief pursuant to the compensation court's rules, the cross appeal need only be asserted in the appellee's brief. In addition, the bill clarifies that the compensation court may, at its option, notice a plain error not assigned in an application for review or brief.

*Effective date September 4, 2005.*

## LB 238:

### Clean-up Provisions

**Section 48-115** was amended to clarify that changes made by the Legislature in 2002 relating to workers' compensation coverage for corporate officers apply only to workers' compensation policies with an effective date on or after January 1, 2003. Previous law would apply to poli-

cies with an effective date before January 1, 2003. The bill also standardizes language relating to elections of workers' compensation coverage by making language in subsection 10 consistent with that in subsection 11. In addition, a reference relating to exclusions of coverage in health, accident, and other insurance policies was clarified.

**Section 48-118** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor. However, subsequent changes to this section under LB 13 would likely supersede this language.

**Section 48-120** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor. The bill also clarifies language relating to the release of medical and hospital information in Nebraska workers' compensation cases. Currently, §48-120(4) states that "[g]enerally, all medical and hospital information relevant to the particular injury shall, on demand, be made available to the employer, the employee, the [insurance] carrier, and the compensation court." The existence of the word "generally" in §48-120 creates a potential ambiguity as to the meaning of our law under HIPAA, and this section removes the ambiguity by deleting the word "generally."

**Section 48-125** was amended to clarify the period during which interest is computed on an award of compensation. There is potential ambiguity under current law as to whether interest is owed for the entire period from when compensation becomes payable until it is actually paid, or only for the number of weeks for which compensation is owed under the Act. This change makes it clear that interest is owed from the date compensation is payable until it is actually paid.

**Section 48-126** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

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# Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court

## Order Form

(No Charge Items)

### Ship To:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip Code) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court

P. O. Box 98908

Lincoln, NE 68509-8908

Phone: 402-471-6468 or 800-599-5155

FAX: 402-471-2700

Web site: <http://www.wcc.ne.gov/>

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Paid by:      Check \_\_\_\_\_  
                   Cash \_\_\_\_\_  
                   Mailed \_\_\_\_\_  
                   Picked Up \_\_\_\_\_

### Single Forms (Limit of 10 per order — Copies can be made)

# SGL	Form Number/Item Name	# SGL	Form Number/Item Name
	Form 1—First Report of Injury/Illness (Rev. 03/02)		Form 4—Subsequent Report (Rev. 03/02)
	Form 12—Insurance Coverage (Rev. 6/95)		

### Single Pamphlets or Packages (Limit of 4 Packages)

# SGL	# PKG	Item Name
	(25)	Rights & Obligations (English 10/03)
	(25)	Rights & Obligations (Spanish 10/03)
	(50)	Choosing a Doctor for a Work-Related Injury (English 11/99)
	(50)	Choosing a Doctor for a Work-Related Injury (Spanish 11/99)
	(25)	Vocational Rehabilitation Services under Workers' Compensation (English 2/01)
	(25)	Vocational Rehabilitation Services under Workers' Compensation (Spanish 2/01)
	(50)	Informal Dispute Resolution and Mediation (English 1/00)

### Single Forms

Quantity	Form Number/Item Name	Quantity	Form Number/Item Name
	Form 63-1—Request for Independent Medical Examiner (9/01)		Form 50—Choice of Doctor (English 1/97)
	Form 67-2—Notice of Agreement to use a Named Independent Medical Examiner (7/97)		Form 50—Choice of Doctor (Spanish 8/97)
	Form 10T—Termination of Corporate Officer Waiver (Rev. 12/96)		

**Turn this page over for additional publications**

# Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court

## Order Form

(Fee Items)

### Ship To:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip Code) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court  
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Web site: <http://www.wcc.ne.gov/>

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Paid by: Check \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailed \_\_\_\_\_  
Picked Up \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Many of the items below are available on our Web site (<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/pubs.htm>) for downloading and printing.

Quantity	Forms and Publications	Unit Cost	Total
	Law Book (Includes 2004 Legislative Revisions) <b>To order, contact LexisNexis at 1-800-562-1197.</b>		
	Rule Book (Rev. 05/2004)	\$7.00	
	Annual Report (FY 2004)	\$5.00	
	Statistical Report for Injury Years 1998 – 2004 <b>Note:</b> this publication is only available on our Web site ( <a href="http://www.wcc.ne.gov/pubs/98-04statisticalreport.pdf">http://www.wcc.ne.gov/pubs/98-04statisticalreport.pdf</a> ).		
	Schedule of Medical & Hospital Fees <b>To order, contact Ingenix, Inc. at 1-800-464-3649.</b> - For 2004 Schedule, request item number 4587 (book only) or 4588 (book and CD).		
<b>Payment should be only for publications and/or services indicated on this order form</b>		<b>Total Due</b>	

### All orders must be prepaid before shipping — either by check or money order

Service and handling charges are included in the listed cost of each item. Forms may be picked up at the court's location, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, State Capitol. Please call ahead to be sure your order is ready (if paying with cash, the correct amount is required). Order forms and other information may also be downloaded from the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court's internet Web site: <http://www.wcc.ne.gov/>. For further information, or if your order is not received within three weeks, please contact the court's information line at either **402-471-6468** or **800-599-5155**.

**Turn this page over for additional publications**

## Updates to the Workers' Compensation Court Web site

In June 2005, the court's Web site was updated to comply with the Branding and Policy Consistency standard of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

The purpose of this standard is to assure site visitors that they are viewing an official State of Nebraska Web site. In order to implement the standard, a common header graphic is added to all official state government Web pages; and common information, including privacy and security policies, is included in the footer of each Web page.

## Court to implement electronic filing of Proof of Coverage information

In an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Advisory dated September 15, 2005, the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court announced it will require Proof of Coverage information to be filed electronically using the IAIABC Release 2.1 Proof of Coverage standards, **effective December 15, 2005**. The court will accept the electronic filing of Proof of Coverage (EDI POC) information from insurance companies, either directly with the court or by way of court-certified vendors. Currently the court has certified and approved NCCI and ISO to file EDI POC information.

For more information, please contact the court's EDI POC Business Contact, Allen Kassebaum, at 800-599-5155. Also, please visit our Web site's EDI page (<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/edi.htm>). This page has a link from which visitors can subscribe to receive automatic email notice of upcoming EDI Advisories. ❖

Also new to the Web site, the court's forms in Portable Document Format (PDF) were enhanced to comply with the Governor's Initiative to electronically automate the thousands of paper forms that are critical to the State's business. The court's PDF forms may now be completed electronically, printed and then mailed or faxed to the court.

A Web page dedicated to Vocational Rehabilitation issues (<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/vr.htm>) was added to the site recently. From this page, visitors can view the listing of court-certified private VR counselors, download VR-related publications and forms, review upcoming VR meeting announcements and minutes of past meetings, and look up the court's VR Specialists by city name.

Career opportunities within the court will now be posted on its Web site (<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/careers.htm>). Applicants should go to the DAS-State Personnel Web site (<http://www.wrk4neb.org/>) to apply for these positions.

The court's Statistical Report for injury years 1998 through 2004 is available on the Publications/Forms

Web page ([http://www.wcc.ne.gov/pubs/statisticalreport\\_98-04.pdf](http://www.wcc.ne.gov/pubs/statisticalreport_98-04.pdf)).

Please note that the court's Web site url is now **<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/>**. ❖

## How to transmit EDI transactions to the court

The court accepts all EDI transmissions through several different communication interfaces. A direct connection to our EDI FTP server is available to trading partners that wish to use secure FTP using FTP/TLS encryption. The Advantis VAN, the Red Oak E-Commerce Solutions, Inc., Bridium and HealthTech products are communication options used by many of our current trading partners.

The list of current EDI Vendors may be viewed on our Web site ([http://www.wcc.ne.gov/edi/edi\\_vendors.pdf](http://www.wcc.ne.gov/edi/edi_vendors.pdf)). ❖

## Dispensation of medicines under the Act

The Nebraska Legislature passed LB 13 during the last legislative session that amends the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act. The full text of the bill is available on the Unicameral's Web site (<http://www.unicam.state.ne.us>). Section 28 of this bill adds a new provision to the Act that applies to persons dispensing medicines and medical supplies to individuals entitled to benefits under the Act. The specific language is as follows:

"Any person that dispenses medicines and medical supplies, as required by Section 48-120, shall dispense the generic drug equivalent unless:

1. A generic drug equivalent is unavailable; or
2. The prescribing physician specifically provides in writing that a nongeneric drug must be dispensed."

This portion of the Act becomes operative on September 4, 2005. Questions concerning this change may be directed to the court's Coverage and Claims Manager, Kris Peterson, at 800-599-5155. ❖

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**Section 48-136** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

**Section 48-144.01** was amended to extend the period during which reports of injuries must be filed with the compensation court, and to clarify the definition of reportable injuries. The bill also redefines medical treatment for purposes of reporting to the court, and defines first aid treatment (which does not have to be reported) by incorporating what is essentially OSHA's definition of first aid.

**Section 48-144.03** was amended to change provisions relating to cancellation and nonrenewal of workers' compensation insurance policies. The changes are in response to *Brouillette vs. DBV Enterprises, Inc.*, 9 Neb. App. 757, 619 N.W.2d 482 (2000). The bill clarifies that no cancellation of a policy within the policy period and no nonrenewal of a policy at the end of a policy period shall be effective unless notice is given by the insurer to the compensation court and the employer in accordance with this section.

**Section 144.04** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

**Section 48-145** was amended to incorporate subsection (2) of section 48-146, relating to self-insurance security, which is being transferred from that section for organizational purposes only. No substantive change is involved in the transfer.

**Section 48-146** was amended to clarify existing language regarding requirements for workers' compensation insurance policies and agreements forming a risk management pool. Subsection (2) was transferred to §48-145 for organizational purposes only. No substantive change is involved in the transfer.

**Section 48-146.03** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

**Section 48-155.01** was amended to change provisions relating to appointment of an acting judge of the compensation court, and to provide that an acting judge may be called to temporary duty in order to relieve a congested docket of the court or to sit for a judge of the court who may be incapacitated or absent for any reason. Current law provides only that an acting judge may sit for a judge who is

disqualified or is temporarily absent due to sickness or other emergency.

**Section 48-178** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

**Section 48-178.01** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

**Section 48-1,117** was amended to incorporate clean-up language requested by the Revisor.

Effective date September 4, 2005. ❖

## Maximum income benefit and mileage reimbursement rate increase

Effective January 1, 2006, the **maximum weekly income benefit** under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act will increase to \$600.00. This amount applies to work-related injuries and illnesses occurring on or after January 1, 2006. This amount equals 100 percent of the state average weekly wage as determined by the administrator of the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court. The maximum is set according to a statutory formula.

The previous maximum weekly income benefit levels will continue to apply to work-related injuries and illnesses occurring during their effective dates. The minimum weekly income benefit remains at \$49.00.

Effective September 1, 2005, the **mileage reimbursement rate** has increased to 48.5¢ per mile for travel to seek medical treatment or while participating in a vocational rehabilitation plan. This conforms to the reimbursement rate paid to State of Nebraska employees.

For more information, please call the court's toll-free information line at 800-599-5155 or 402-471-6468. The court's Web site (<http://www.wcc.ne.gov/>) also contains information regarding the court's operations. ❖

## Court staff bring home awards from IAIABC Convention

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tion systems throughout the United States, Canada, and other nations and territories. Its mission is to advance the administration of workers' compensation systems throughout the world through education, research, and information sharing. It is governed by an Executive Committee of jurisdictional agency leaders, and maintains a staff headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. ❖